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ABSTRACT

The author discusses various trends in the preparation of physical education teachers, including emphasis on Title IX requirements and handicapped child needs. Future directions in teacher certification are surveyed, and it is urged that certification be based upon sequential training programs rather than course accumulation-credit hour credentialling mechanisms. (MJB)

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Certification of Physical Education Teachers

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Certification of Physical Education teachers is undergoing what could be called subtle, evolutionary changes. While individual certification requirements of tbe 50 states have not changed very much from the basic requirements of a bachelor's degree with coursework distributed across general education, professional education and subject matter specialty, college and university educators, national and state professional associations such as the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, and individual practitioners in public schools, have been effecting changes in the training program curriculum. It is by changing the focus or direction of the training program content that effects the most significant change in the resulting certification.

Teacher preparation and Certification are difficult to separate, as completion of the former results in obtaining the latter. One of the distinct trends that is occurring in preparation and certification, however, is to increasingly rely on content work that explicitly relates to meeting public school needs. Certification systems that are not overly specific in quantifying exact coursework or semester-hour requirements fare much better in responding more quickly to changes in public school needs and professional curriculum modifications and redirections.

Increasingly, certification is looked upon by school employers as evidence that the individual is well prepared to meet the demands of the teaching situation and the teaching field. In the case of Physical Education

SP012 069

teachers, new demands for dealing with Title IX requirements of affirmative action and the anticipated demands of Public Law 94-142 dealing with the education of all handicapped children, will necessitate training prospective Physical Education teachers to meet these demands as a part of the preparation and certification programs.

The traditional areas of Physical Education training -- activity courses; the scientific arenas of anatomy, kinesiology, physiology of activity; and the technical areas of how to teach and administer, tests and measurements and methods -- remain as major emphases in certification requirements. Supplementing these, however, are increased emphasis and coursework in the so-called new physical education. This is particularly true in those preparation programs which focus on the elementary school physical education teacher. Emphasis on body movement using a child-centered approach to teaching movement rather than the more traditional activity-centered approach appears to be gaining, or as I am told, <u>regaining</u> a prominent place in the curriculum of physical education teachers.

Additionally, enhancing the training program of physical education teachers, is increased attention to coursework dealing with the nature of handicapping conditions; understanding movement related to handicapping conditions; diagnosis and assessment of perceptual motor and physical fitness; and, individualization of instruction. While not limited to physical education teachers, preparation programs are beginning to deal with issues surrounding the legal liability of the practicing teacher--an area of some importance to the physical educator.

Other trends in preparation programs have an impact on the resulting certification. While still debated in many circles, increasing numbers of physical education departments no longer distinguish between men's and women's physical education. This change alone serves to assure both men and women of a certain commonality in training as well as greater equality in competing for available jobs.

Turning from an examination of where we are, where does it seem certification is headed? Many of the directions I will discuss are occurring in some places at this time. I do, however, see them as directions most states will come to implement as accepted routes to certification.

The approved program route to certification is currently utilized in some form or another in 37 states. This route focuses upon a sequential training program rather than a course accumulation--credit hour credentialling mechanism. Some states, like Illinois, use both methods, though we in Illinois keep trying to legislatively change our system to certification only upon completion of an approved program. The approved program route to certification affords institutions much greater flexibility in setting the professional training curriculum and in meeting particular state needs without having to generate specifically titled courses that may or may not be appropriate. For example, a state requirement of coursework in understanding the nature of handicapping conditions in children could be met by adding a particular course to the curriculum, but it might be as well or better met by integrating the coursework into existing and appropriate sequences already in the curriculum.

Certification is also being directed to more clearly demonstrate responsiveness to public school needs. Recent experience with both challenge

to various tests given for certification and litigation over the job-relatedness of employment criteria have given us state bureaucrats responsible for licensing both headaches and opportunity. None of us in state education departments have always been able to rationally defend all certification requirements, even to ourselves. The opportunity confronting us all is to work to insure that the certification requirements do indeed bear a direct relationship to the knowledge and skills necessary to be a practitioner. By focusing on the needs of public schools and making preparation programs responsive to those needs, it would seem that certification can become the job-ready guarantee employers desire.

Some states are considering whether certification ought to come after a longer period of preparation. With increasing demands for greater content area study and earlier clinical experiences, many suggest a longer period of preparation. The debate on this issue will be long and protracted. While some suggest more, others consider restructuring what we do now as a more viable approach.

Perhaps because of responsiveness to public school needs, certification and preparation programs are more clearly delineating specialties and options for the physical education teacher. Recognition is also being given to encouraging dual certification, or at least specialized options in health, safety education, athletic training and special education.

State education agencies can and should be responsive to the individual professions. In responding to the physical education profession, I would offer several suggestions which, if implemented, would serve both the state and the profession well in guaranteeing quality preparation and certification. State education departments should involve the professional

physical educator, both from higher education and elementary and secondary education, as team members in reviewing teacher education programs. Taking part in the approval of preparation programs by the individual professions insures a critical examination by those most knowledgeable.

State departments should work to increase the flexibility and alternatives available for institutions in developing and maintaining physical education preparation programs.

Professional organizations can assist state departments by sharing information on current trends in the teaching of physical education and thus effect the job-relatedness of the preparation and certification requirements.

Finally, state departments must begin to share with the preparing institutions and the professional organizations information obtained on public school needs, including graduate follow-up data, reports of inservice training needs to be considered in revising preservice preparation programs, and areas of shortage and supply. Some of us--state departments, professional educators and organizations--do some of these some of the time. Our record needs to be better; none of us can do it alone.

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